Continuation of Appl. No. 10/198,364 Preliminary Amendment dated: July 31, 2003

REMARKS

Applicants have amended the specification to cross reference the parent applications.

Applicants have amended the claims taking into consideration the prosecution in the parent application. The original claims 28, 32 and 39 have been canceled from the application and claims 1-27, 29-31 and 33-38 have been amended to more particularly define the invention.

Applicants believe that these claims are in full compliance with 35 U.S.C. §112 and are clearly patentable over the references of record in the parent application.

The present application is a continuation application and the prior art cited in the parent applications should be taken into consideration in the present application. In accordance with MPEP §2001.06(b) no copies of the prior art in the parent applications are submitted herewith. The reference cited forms from the parent applications are submitted herewith for the convenience of the Examiner. In accordance with MPEP §609, a Form 1449 listing these references is also submitted herewith. Applicants have cited five new references on the Form 1449 which are marked copies enclosed and submit herewith copies of each of the five new references cited. Confirmation that the prior art cited in the parent applications and the five new references have been considered in the next Official Action is most respectfully requested.

In view of the above amendments to the specification and claims an early and favorable action on the merits is now in order and is most respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted, BACON & THOMAS, PLLC

Richard E. Fichter

Registration No. 26,382

625 Slaters Lane, 4th Fl. Alexandria, Virginia 22314 Phone: (703) 683-0500 Facsimile: (703) 683-1080

REF:kdd PA01.wpd

July 31, 2003